

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter

VOLUME III, No. 2

APRIL 1973

The first warm days of spring had come, when for all the chill of frosty nights, the sky and the white clouds drifting across it looked soft and hazy as in summer . . .

In the Sugar Camp, ROWLAND E. ROBINSON



This photo by Louis F. Brehmer has everything: several kids, a yoke of oxen, a wooden sap bucket or two and a dog. This is the Pike sugar bush in Mendon, a stone's throw from the northeast corner of Rutland Town. The date is approximately 1905. *From left to right:* Carl Brehmer, nephew of the photographer and father of Mrs. H. T. Swain; Rena Pike; Hugh Perkins, now living in Manchester; Harris Perkins; and, in door of sugar house, Arthur Johnson. We are indebted to Glen and Hugh Perkins, brothers of Harris and sons of Harley Perkins, and to Mrs. Henry Alexander for identifying this photograph, which is from the Society's collection.

Museum Notes

Despite bad weather on several Thursday evenings, interest continues in the Museum. Five clubs and as many groups of school children have visited during the week by appointment. We will continue to be open Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 and Sunday afternoons from 2 to 5.

Recent acquisitions add variety and depth to our slim holdings. By purchase we now have a book about William Henry Jackson and his days in Rutland (see also page 4) and from the American Antiquarian Society, a copy of the Reverend Samuel Williams' *Day Book*.

From Mr. Howard V. Smith we received in memory of his wife Alice Bailey Smith and her father, Wayne Bailey, a collection of photographs and mementos of Rutland life in the late days of the 19th century. Included are photos of the Bailey home at 31 North Main St., the dog "Nero" (at that time the largest dog in the world, weighing 285 pounds), Rutland scenes (see page 7 for a sample) a fine run of an amateur newspaper of 1873, The RUTLAND TIMES, numerous pamphlets including a trolley timetable, theatre programs, club brochures and Rutland Heralds.

From Norman Favor; a run of Vermont Directories. From Gilbert Godnick a well designed cast iron fluted pillar from the Berwick and framed pictures from the same hotel.

We were entrusted by the Fire Department with the custody and display of framed pictures of the early days of the City Department, including a Currier and Ives lithograph presented in 1873 by Harry Bates to the Killington Steamers Company. The Charles E. Tuttle Company presented an early photograph which is printed in this issue on page 4. On exhibit in a case given by the Rutland Free Library is a striking collection of early door hardware from the Richmond Burr Collection. Our Julia Dorr material will be displayed to better advantage when we solve the logistical problems involved in getting a massive display case from the second floor of the library, also a gift of the Free Library.

The plans mentioned cautiously in the last *Newsletter* to exhibit material of an old Rutland firm have matured to the point where we can announce that the Howe Richardson Scale Company is cooperating with the Society in classifying and preparing for exhibit material relating to the history of that Company.

A portion of the Ella Bean Livingston Collection of Indian Crafts will be displayed in the Chaffee Art Gallery this spring and we expect to have the balance of the Livingston Collection on display this fall.

In this issue begins a series on the effect of fire on our institutions, homes, business and lives. From time to time, as the material is available, we shall pursue this subject, never expecting to exhaust the source material nor hoping to set down a definitive history. Other topics will be treated similarly.

Fire, like pestilence, war, famine and flood, is a most important factor in the ecology of the human race. It is a means of keeping warm, preparing food, generating energy, powering machinery. In its unmanaged state it violently disrupts the balance which man has been tinkering with since the first Indian dropped a cod fish into a hill of corn. Besides taking lives, destroying homes and businesses, fire is responsible for the "natural" appearance on this globe of countless acres of grasslands, pure stands of southern pine, douglas fir, and redwoods. Our concern is with fire as a disrupter of Rutland life and what these changes were. The first article follows:

WATER & FIRE

By JON MAYO

The danger of fire and the importance of an adequate source of water, were often-discussed problems during Rutland's period of rapid growth in the middle nineteenth century.

As early as 1829, residents of the village of East Rutland had established a fire society, but it was not until 1845 that some apparent action was taken to construct a reservoir. Consideration was given at that time to erection of a water storage facility in back of North Church, [Ed.-Congregational] to be connected with an aqueduct running along Main and West Streets.

In 1846 estimates were made on the cost of building such a reservoir: \$15 for two square rods of land; logs for an aqueduct through Main Street, \$264; on West Street, \$24; enclosure for the reservoir, \$60; brick reservoir of 30,000 gallons, \$174. However, nothing was accomplished under these plans, and in 1848 the fire society relinquished its powers to the village corporation.

It was not until 1858 that substantial improvements were made to the village's water supply. Prior to that time the most important source of water was in control of the Aqueduct Company and consisted of wooden pipes laid by Gershom Cheney from a large spring at the edge of Mendon, to the village. Residents paid a tax for the use of this water. In 1858 a reservoir was constructed in the present area of Deer Street off Woodstock Avenue, and some five miles of pipe were laid. It was arranged that persons who were already obtaining water from the Aqueduct Company could have water from the new pipes at the rate of \$5 per year. Business firms were to be allowed the use of the facilities at proportionately higher rates: Franklin House, \$45; Huntoon's Hotel, \$15; stores, \$5. Between 1858 and 1862 pipes were laid in East, Green, Grove, Pine, Cottage, Howe, Elm and Pleasant Streets. (Green Street is now Killington Avenue, and is one of the oldest roads in the city.)

By 1868 the rapidly-growing city had already outgrown its water supply. In that year a great fire occurred on April 3, involving some \$50,000 in losses. The Franklin House, filled with guests at the time of the fire, the Owen block, court house, and three other buildings were destroyed. The inadequacy of the water supply brought about the formation of a committee to look into the subject of a new water supply for the town. About \$20,000 was expended in 1868 for the construction of a new water supply.

This new supply proved sufficient for only about ten years, and by 1878 it had again become apparent that a still more extensive water system was imperatively needed. Much thought was given to the tapping of East Creek as a water source, and finally such a system was adopted. At a cost of \$28,000, a twelve-inch iron aqueduct was laid from East Creek to the reservoir, a distance of about three miles. In 1879 water pipes and fire hydrants were extended throughout the village at the cost of an additional \$20,000. At the water source on East Creek a stone and gravel filter was also constructed to permit only clear water to enter the system. The Beers atlas of 1869 indicates the location of the first reservoir at Deer Street, and evidences of it were still visible in the 1940's.

Our Treasurer reminds us that if dues of \$2.00 have not been paid for 1973 he will be glad to receive them by mail, the address being: George J. Covalt, West Rutland, Vt. And, he adds, the Society has Sustaining Memberships available at \$100.00; Life Memberships at \$75.00 (a one-time investment); Contributing Memberships at \$10.00; and Institutional Memberships at \$30.00. All membership payments (and contributions) are tax deductible.

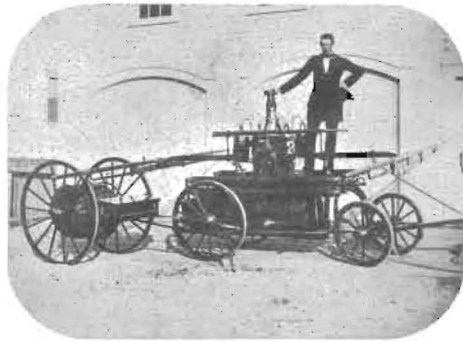


Photo by studio of Mowrey & Russel (William Henry Jackson may be the photographer). Gift of the Charles E. Tuttle Co.

This is the earliest photograph of Rutland known to us. There are, undoubtedly, earlier ones and they will come to light.

The year is 1863 when the Washington Hose Company No. 2 was re-organized with a brand new pumper on which the newly elected foreman proudly stands. This photo may also be an early example of the photographic skill of the young William Henry Jackson, later to win fame as pioneer photographer of the West. Before the Civil War Jackson served an apprenticeship in Mowrey's studio, left to serve a two-year hitch via the Kingsley Guards and returned for a brief time in mid 1863. The editor likes to believe that only a young, inventive and enterprising photographer would have posed his subject on the engine, rather than on the ground. Jackson sketched many scenes around Rutland and the Society is attempting to obtain copies from the owners, the National Park Service.

The foreman of the Washington Hose Company shown above is Horatio G. Litchfield, born 1824, died aged 38 years in 1864 of congestion of the lungs. He was Master Mechanic and Chief of Rolling Stock of the Rutland Railroad and on the day of his funeral the railroad issued passes to anyone wishing to come to Rutland for the funeral. As late as 1873 the Washington Hose Company was raising money for his widow and three children.

. . . meanwhile, in the West Parish.

A six year old girl in 1903 (who wishes to remain anonymous) witnessed one of the most devastating fires in the town. Her recollections are that there was a mixture of three overpowering smells—sauerkraut, pickles and smoke—and the effect was so strong that ever since she cannot abide sauerkraut.

The HERALD relates that the fire broke out about 9:00 P.M., completely wiping out the buildings on both sides of Marble Street from Smith Street to the West Rutland House, and extending a short distance on Smith Street. Damage, estimated at \$50,000, affected nine business blocks, three dwelling houses and three barns. J. E. Burke's house on Thrall Avenue was also burned.

Since there was no fire department or hydrants in the parish the Rutland City Department was called for. As soon as they arrived about 11:00 P.M., after some difficulty getting extra horses to pull the steamer, hoses were laid to a nearby stream and water was poured on the neighboring buildings to prevent the spread of the blazes. The fire was declared under control at 12:30.

So intense was the heat that the trolley wires and supports melted, letting the wires down into the street and putting the cars out of business. The telephone wires were also destroyed.

TOM CANAVAN

Book Review

The Prose of Royall Tyler. Collected and edited by Marius B. Peladeau. Published jointly by The Vermont Historical Society and the Charles E. Tuttle Co. (Rutland, Vt.) 1972. 501 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by Benjamin F. Crawford

Royall Tyler was a versatile person: a writer of fiction, a journalist, an orator; a lawyer who rose to the Vermont judiciary; an educated man whose sense of responsibility thrust him into the public affairs of the adolescent years of our new Republic (1790-1825). He was not a seeker of fame; he was content to help his fellow citizens adjust to the new U. S. Constitution and the new way of life it was molding after the colonial ties to England had been broken. His "Oration on the Death of Washington" delivered at Bennington in 1800 illustrates his devotion to the ideals of his youthful country. It might be added that Tyler was also an effective lay-preacher. His "Sermon and Prayer for Christmas Day" will repay reading even today.

It was through his pen, however, that Tyler strove through many years to clarify for his fellow-citizens the spirit and the practice of the new American way of life. He gained some popular recognition through his two fictional works. "The Algerine Captive," praised by Fenimore Cooper, wove into its text a picture of New England life that was fresh in its coloring, distinct from the tradition of the English literary men. His later novel, largely autobiographical, "Bay Boy," was a step farther along the road leading to a more native American literature. It reflects Tyler's own boyhood in the lively years leading up to the American Revolution. This book has in it a foretaste of Tyler's later style in its critical, frequently humorous, descriptions of colonial life and personalities. More and more he was developing into an American writer on American themes.

It was through his essays, chiefly, that his pen carried on his education of his fellow Americans to the advantages of American life in the early and turbulent years of the new nation. In the "Colon and Spondee" essays written in conjunction with Joseph Dennie, he was a forerunner of the modern newspaper columnist. Indeed, Tyler and Dennie caught the popular eye, in a more reflective age, and set a fashion of journalistic writing that brought several imitators into unsuccessful competition. The aim of "Colon and Spondee" was to make running comment, often humorous but more often satirical, upon the contemporary American culture, literature, morality, and life in general. The humor might not raise a smile today, and the satire is dated by the passing of time; but the essays did in their day make American values understandable for readers open to strength and vigor in language rather than literary charm. They bespoke a sympathetic observer of the good in the American people; and their satirical sallies were not meant to be taken too seriously.

Other miscellaneous essays followed "Colon" along the same path. "The Saunterer" published in THE FARMER'S WEEKLY MUSEUM restates the purpose of our essayist: "to ascend the watchtower, to throw a gauntlet, or break a spear with champions of vice or folly." If you overlook the mixed metaphor, you will find here the running theme of Tyler's essays in general.¹

(1) The Museum is now displaying the issue for March 10, 1795 of THE FARMER'S WEEKLY MUSEUM, the gift of Mr. Frederick S. Chaffee.

This is a good place to observe that Tyler was not an orderly writer. He was a master of language that flowed without effort; he wrote rapidly in a spate of words that brooked no disciplined control. He rarely rewrote; indeed, he left such matters as bad grammar or punctuation or spelling for the editor or typesetter to detect and correct. Yet his prose was clear, rhythmic, fluent; his was the talent to make things real in a manner understandable by the ordinary readers of his day.

Tyler's writing was an avocation with an underlying hope of creating a clientele for his law practice. He had done some law work in Massachusetts; but in 1791 he began to practice law in Vermont. His reputation won for him a steady and full docket of cases and also election as Vermont's State Attorney, serving from 1794 to 1801 when he was elected as Assistant Judge. In 1807 he was made Vermont's Chief Justice, serving to 1813. He became Vermont's most prestigious legal figure, heading several State Commissions and teaching as Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Vermont. In 1822 failing eyesight and waning health reduced severely both his legal practice and his public activity.

He did complete a two-volume "Reports," drawn from his own meticulous note-taking, on cases tried before the Vermont Supreme Court. Historically, the most important is the Blacksnake Case dealing with a charge of murder done in the course of a conflict of smugglers vs. law-enforcers in the bitter times following the unpopular Embargo Act of 1807. Of legal significance is the Case of the Selectmen of Windsor vs. Jacobs (1802) dealing with the obligations flowing from a bill of sale of a Negro slave residing in Vermont. (Vermont was the first state to outlaw slavery.)

Judge Tyler's Charge to the Jury in the trial of Cyrus Dean for murder (Blacksnake Case 1808) is an excellent example of the power and clarity of his prose as well as his judicial astuteness tempered by compassion.

A word about the excellent editorship of Marius B. Peladeau. His scholarly and readable book is the fruit of a huge labor of research in tracking down the vast number of pieces of the works of Tyler as they were published in various printed media or discovered still in manuscript form. The editor's copious notes at the bottom of so many pages serve to clarify allusions made by Tyler which the passage of time has rendered opaque. Indeed, the notes are often more entertaining than the text.

It will be of interest to Rutlanders to note that this volume is dedicated to the memory of a fellow Rutlander, John P. Clement, a former President of the Vermont Historical Society. It was in a street of Rutland that he was injured in a fatal automobile accident in 1968.

The editor adds to the text an appendix, a bibliography, an alphabetical index, a chronological index, a subject index—all of service to the serious student of Tyler's times.

Mr. Crawford, a retired New York City teacher, is an active member of the Society and he and Mrs. Crawford are ardent walkers.



The parish of St. Peter's is celebrating this month the one hundredth anniversary of the completion of its church, built under the direction of Milo Lyman, the contractor of many large stone buildings, including Memorial Hall. In addition to our congratulations, we offer as our contribution to this observance two photographs of a secular nature.

The people living in the parish of St. Peters have always suffered from floods. That of 1927 will always be remembered for its extremely high water and the flood of 1947 for its mud and silt. From the earlier uprising of the waters we show a nautical scene in the rear of Mount St. Joseph Academy photographed by Miss Ellen A. Stevenson from the west end of Rice Avenue. Paddling the canoe are: Francis F. Allison (*bow*) and Francis Rice (*stern*). We are indebted to Mrs. R. F. Rice for identifying the canoeists, and to Miss Mary Rustedt for the use of this photo from the Dr. George Rustedt album.



A Rutland Street Railway trolley passes the Woman's Reformatory with a full complement of riders returning home from work on a pleasant summer's evening. The date—shortly after the turn of the century. Since removed from the East Parish skyline are, *from left to right*: the Tem Co. shirt factory on Cleveland Avenue; the dome over the engine house in the left background; the Robinson Coal Co. sheds; the cupola on the Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph; and the original steeple of St. Peter's Church. From the Society's collection, the gift of Mr. Howard V. Smith in memory of his wife Alice B. Smith and her father, Wayne Bailey.

The year 1973 A.D.

- April 18 Archeological dig. Planning and orientation meeting. The Museum, 7:00 P.M.
- April 27 and 28 Book sale at the Museum. Ten in the morning. Benefit of the Museum. If you have books or allied materials (photos, scrap-books, clippings, etc.) please let us know. We will pick up. Phone 773-3417 for further information. Some books and papers we gladly use in the museum; the rest we reserve the right to sell to raise funds for our operations.
- April 21 Cemetery Clean-up day. See notice.
- May 12 "Easy" archeological dig. For practice. Details in the newspaper. Hereafter abbreviated as "arky dig."
- May 27 Putting to practice the facts and folklore we picked up at the Historical Sites meetings in March. We'll be among ourselves—this is a "dry run" of the walking tour.
- June 6 Arky dig after supper—Laying out base lines and mapping in Mill Village.
- June 23 First walking tour. As many as would like come out and give support, moral or otherwise, to the guides. Everyone who acts as guide will have a chance to go on as many tours as they wish before they "fly solo."

Notice

The freemen of Rutland are warned that the fishing season will open April 28, but that an opportunity for exercise is afforded by this Society on Saturday, April 21, when impatient fishermen and others may repair to the junction of Pleasant Street and The Castleton Road in the West Parish in order to refurbish the small cemetery north of the marble mills. Meet at 9:30 A.M. bringing shears, grub hoes, gloves and lunches.

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